



September 1, 2010

FCEM&HS WILL TEST COMMUNICATIONS INTEROPERABILITY IN SEPT. 28 EXERCISE

Response Scenario Will Simulate Terrorist Attack on Central Ohio

Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (FCEM&HS) and other local emergency response agencies will conduct a full-scale Interoperable Emergency Communications Exercise on Sept. 28, simulating a terrorist attack on Central Ohio and serious damage to the Franklin County Emergency Operations Center and its communications equipment.

The half-day field exercise will test Franklin County's emergency operations plans and procedures in such a scenario, providing a learning environment for communications specialists and other participants to practice how they would respond to an incident requiring seamless interoperable communications. Interoperability is the capability of diverse communications equipment used by different response agencies to work together, enabling fast and accurate incident communications among responders and emergency managers.

"We are doing all we can to prepare for all hazards," said FCEM&HS Director Michael R. Pannell. "Interoperability in communications is crucial to establishing a common operational picture for the FCEM&HS Emergency Operations Center and incident responders."

FCEM&HS will evaluate the exercise for proof of concept, or how mobile emergency communications centers can be used in the event the Franklin County Emergency Operations Center becomes inoperable.

The exercise is funded by a grant FCEM&HS received under the federal FY09 Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program, administered by the Ohio Emergency Management Agency.

The exercise will allow participating jurisdictions to evaluate Franklin County's current communications plans and capabilities, focusing especially on the integration of key city and county communications equipment. Assets being tested include the City of Columbus Communications Emergency Response Vehicle (CERV), City of Columbus Command 18, Buckeye State Sheriff's Association Unit 11 and the Franklin County Sheriff's Command Vehicle.

Exercise participants include Columbus Division of Fire, Columbus Division of Police, Franklin County Sheriff's Office, Columbus Division of Support Services, FCEM&HS, Madison County Emergency Management Agency and the Ohio Emergency Management Agency.

Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security, a local government agency, coordinates county-wide emergency/disaster planning, education, warning, response, and recovery to minimize adverse impacts on area residents and property.